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Secretary of State Padilla and Assemblymember Gonzalez Fletcher Announce Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2018 ***Bond Seeks \$450 Million to Update Aging Voting Systems***

SACRAMENTO, CA – California Secretary of State Alex Padilla and Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher (D-San Diego) announced today Assembly Bill 668, the Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2018, which seeks \$450 million to improve California’s voting systems. The funding would update aging equipment and also modernize how the state conducts elections to improve the voting experience.

“California voting equipment is perilously near its life expectancy,” said Secretary of State Padilla. “Many counties have voting systems that were designed and engineered in the 1990s. These older voting systems rely on antiquated hardware with some using zip drives, dot matrix printers, and Windows 2000 or 2003. We wouldn’t settle for 20-year old technology in our cell phones and computers—our voting systems should be no different. An investment in modern voting systems will help protect the integrity of our elections and better serve voters. Modern technology will improve disability and language access, expand early voting opportunities, and provide more options for where, when, and how voters can cast a ballot.”

“Voting is the most important right we have. Voting should be as easy as possible, and outdated and barely functioning voting systems discourage participation and present challenges to elections officials. A healthy democracy has healthy and functioning voting systems,” stated Assemblywoman Gonzalez Fletcher.

“With the introduction of AB 668, the state has an opportunity to create a path forward for counties to acquire critically needed equipment, replacing outdated and aging voting systems,” said Dean Logan, Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk and President of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials.

In [a report published in March](#), the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) recommends that the legislature consider one-time funding to replace aging voting systems. Specifically, the LAO wrote, “In one example, a county’s system had a failed part that no longer is supported by the manufacturer or easy to replace. The county purchased a replacement part through eBay. In another example, a county uses the same system it used in the 1990s. Although this county’s system has been updated periodically, it currently relies on computers that operate on Microsoft

Windows XP—an operating system that was released in 2001 and no longer receives free security upgrades or other support from the manufacturer. Both of these examples raise serious concerns about the security of the voting system as well as the possibility of a catastrophic failure of voting systems in counties.”

The last major investment in California elections systems came through the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 and Proposition 41, the Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2002. Each appropriated \$252 million and \$200 million respectively. These funds were provided to counties as a reimbursement on a 3:1 matching basis, requiring counties to directly pay for 25% of their new voting systems.

In September of 2015, New York University’s Brennan Center for Justice [issued a report](#) that raised concerns including the failure of equipment to work as intended and the difficulty of finding replacement parts for machines that are no longer manufactured.

“The problem of aging voting technology is national and widespread. We ignore it at our collective peril,” said Lawrence Norden, Deputy Director of the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law. “With this bill, California proposes to lead the country with a comprehensive modernization, which will improve accessibility, security, and reliability of our state’s elections.”

In 2014, President Obama’s Commission on Election Administration issued a report that included this passage: “Perhaps the direst warning the Commission heard in its investigation concerned the impending crisis in voting technology. Well-known to election administrators, if not the public at large, this impending crisis arises from the widespread wearing out of voting machines purchased a decade ago ...”

AB668 will also fund innovations in voting access for Californians. Funding would enhance early voting options, same-day voter registration, vote centers, language access, disability access and cyber security. The bill will be heard in the Assembly on Committee on Elections and Redistricting on Tuesday, April 26, at 10:00 A.M./PT.

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